IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-31 (Cancelled).

32. (New) A process for preparing D-pantothenic acid and/or a salt thereof, comprising:

culturing a recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium for a time and under conditions suitable for producing D-pantothenic acid or a salt thereof, and

collecting the D-pantothenic acid or a salt thereof;

wherein the recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium expresses a reduced level of the poxB gene product, which is a pyruvate oxidase, compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium, or

wherein the recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium expresses a poxB gene product having reduced pyruvate oxidase activity compared to the poxB gene product expressed in an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

33. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium expresses a reduced level of the poxB gene product, which is a pyruvate oxidase, compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

34. (New) The process of Claim 33, wherein the poxB gene product is eliminated in the recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium.

35. (New) The process of Claim 33, wherein the expression of the poxB gene product is reduced at least 5% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

36. (New) The process of Claim 33, wherein the expression of the poxB gene product is reduced at least 10% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

37. (New) The process of Claim 33, wherein the expression of the poxB gene product is reduced at least 25% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

38. (New) The process of Claim 33, wherein the expression of the poxB gene product is reduced at least 50% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

39. (New) The process of Claim 33, wherein the expression of the poxB gene product is reduced at least 75% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

40. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium expresses a poxB gene product having reduced pyruvate oxidase activity compared to the poxB gene product expressed in an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

41. (New) The process of Claim 40, wherein the activity of the pyruvate oxidase is reduced at least 5% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

42. (New) The process of Claim 40, wherein the activity of the pyruvate oxidase is reduced at least 10% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

43. (New) The process of Claim 40, wherein the activity of the pyruvate oxidase is reduced at least 25% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

44. (New) The process of Claim 40, wherein the activity of the pyruvate oxidase is reduced at least 50% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

45. (New) The process of Claim 40, wherein the activity of the pyruvate oxidase is reduced at least 75% compared to an unmodified Coryneform bacterium.

46. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the D-pantothenic acid is concentrated prior to said collecting.

47. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the D-pantothenic acid is concentrated after said collecting.

48. (New) The process of Claim 32, further comprising purifying the D-pantothenic acid and/or a D-pantothenic salt.

49. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein said recombinant modified Coryneform bacteria is *Corynebacterium glutamicum*.

50. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein said recombinant modified *Coryneform* bacterium is selected from the group consisting of *Corynebacterium acteoglutamicum, Corynebacterium acetoacidophilum, Corynebacterium thermoaminogenes, Brevibacterium flavum, Brevibacterium lactofermentum,* and *Brevibacterium divaricatum.*

51. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein said recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium further comprises an increased amount of the products of one or more of the following genes compared to the unmodified Coryneform bacterium: panB which codes for ketopantoate hydroxymethyl transferase, panC which codes for patothenate synthetase, ilvC which codes for acetohydroxy-acid isomeroreductase, and ilvD which codes for dihyroxy-acid dehydratase.

52. (New) The process of Claim 50, wherein the panB, panC, ilvC, and ilvD genes are overexpressed in the recombinant modified Coryneform bacterium.

53. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the culturing is in a batch process.

54. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the culturing is in a fed batch process.

55. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein the culturing is in a repeated fed batch process.

56. (New) The process of Claim 32, wherein said poxB gene comprises a polynucleotide which hybridizes under stringent conditions to a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of the complement of SEQ ID NO:1, complement of SEQ ID NO:3, and complement of SEQ ID NO:4 and which encodes a protein having reduced pyruvate oxidase activity compared to a protein encoded by SEQ ID NO:1, and wherein said stringent conditions comprise washing in 5X SSC at a temperature from 50 to 68°C.

57. (New) The process of Claim 56, wherein said poxB gene comprises SEQ ID NO:1.

58. (New) The process of Claim 56, wherein said poxB gene comprises SEQ ID NO:4.